



## AYLESBURY VALE DISTRICT COUNCIL

### Democratic Services

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Text Relay Prefix your telephone number with 18001

30 August 2019

### CABINET

A meeting of the **Cabinet** will be held at **6.30 pm** on **Wednesday 11 September 2019** in **The Paralympic Room, Aylesbury Vale District Council, The Gateway, Gatehouse Road, Aylesbury, HP19 8FF**, when your attendance is requested.

**NOTE:** There will be an informal session starting at 6.15 pm to give Members the opportunity to comment on issues on the Agenda. The press and public may attend as observers.

**Membership:** Councillors: A Macpherson (Leader), S Bowles (Deputy Leader), P Irwin, H Mordue, C Paternoster, Sir Beville Stanier Bt, P Strachan, J Ward and M Winn

Contact Officer for meeting arrangements: Bill Ashton; [bashton@aylesburyvaledc.gov.uk](mailto:bashton@aylesburyvaledc.gov.uk);

### AGENDA

#### 1. APOLOGIES

#### 2. MINUTES (Pages 3 - 6)

To approve as a correct record the Minutes of the meeting held on 13 August 2019, copy attached as an appendix.

#### 3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members to declare any interests.

#### 4. NEW HOMES BONUS - PARISHES SCHEME (Pages 7 - 20)

**Councillor Mordue**

**Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources**

To consider the attached report.

Contact Officer: Jan Roffe (01296) 585186

#### 5. AVDC ENVIRONMENTAL INITIATIVES (Pages 21 - 36)

**Councillor Irwin**

**Cabinet Member for Environment**

To consider the attached report.

Contact Officer: Jeff Membery (01296) 585316

**6. AYLESBURY VALE ESTATES (AVE): REVIEW OF PERFORMANCE AGAINST 2018-19 BUSINESS PLAN (Pages 37 - 42)**  
**Councillor Bowles**  
**Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Economic Development**

To consider the attached report.

Contact Officer: Teresa Lane (01296) 585006

**7. EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC**

The following matter is for consideration by Members "In Committee". It will therefore be necessary to

RESOLVE –

That under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act, 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in the Paragraph indicated in Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

Item No. 8 – Aylesbury Vale Estates (AVE): Review of performance against the 2018-19 Business Plan

The public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information because the report contains information relating to the financial or business affairs of organisations (including the Authority holding that information) and disclosure of commercially sensitive information would prejudice negotiations for contracts and land disposals or transactions.

**8. AYLESBURY VALE ESTATES (AVE): REVIEW OF PERFORMANCE AGAINST THE 2018-19 BUSINESS PLAN (Pages 43 - 92)**  
**Councillor Bowles**  
**Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Economic Development**

To consider the attached confidential information.

Contact Officer: Teresa Lane (01296) 585006

## CABINET

13 AUGUST 2019

**PRESENT:** Councillor A Macpherson (Leader); Councillors S Bowles (Deputy Leader), P Irwin, H Mordue, C Paternoster, Sir Beville Stanier Bt and J Ward.

**APOLOGIES:** Councillors P Strachan and M Winn.

### 1. MINUTES

RESOLVED –

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 18 June, 2019, be approved as a correct record.

### 2. WOODLANDS AND EASTERN LINK ROAD SOUTH

Cabinet received a report asking for funding of £350,000 to be allocated, which would be matched with £350,000 from the County Council (BCC), to allow Buckinghamshire Advantage (BA) and BCC to continue with its work as promoter of the Woodlands site. It was proposed that the funding was made from the New Homes Bonus reserve which currently had £1.548m in unallocated reserves. It was anticipated that the money would be reimbursed to AVDC or the new Buckinghamshire Council at a future date.

The funding was intended to cover work until the outcome of the Housing Infrastructure Fund allocation was known (at the end of 2019) and included:-

- Commencing the design of the carriageway for the whole of ( the Eastern Link Road South (ELRS).
- Progressing the detailed design for A41 roundabout (Phase 1a).
- Progressing the infrastructure delivery plan including site wide drainage strategy.
- A comprehensive legal and financial due diligence exercise to be conducted by BCC that would include red book valuations, financial modelling, governance structure including delivery options and key risk validation. (The purpose of the due diligence work was to ascertain the viability of such an investment and the appropriate governance structure to manage or oversee the disposal).

Members were informed that the Aylesbury Woodlands development would provide high quality commercial floor space (102,080m<sup>2</sup>), 1,100 market and affordable dwellings, an additional 60 residential extra care units, a mixed use local centre, new primary school and the Eastern Link Road South (ELRS).

The Cabinet report also included the history of the Aylesbury Woodlands development that was a joint planning promotion partnership between BCC and AVDC via the Aylesbury Vale Advantage Legacy Board (now Buckinghamshire Advantage BA)). Both councils had originally committed to promoting the scheme because private sector developers had been unwilling to promote the scheme due to the high costs of development and the associated infrastructure requirements in connection with the South East link road.

Working through BA via AVALB, both Councils had spent the past 3 years promoting and producing a scheme that delivered the objectives and meet the infrastructure requirements. Both AVDC and BCC had been funding BA for the Woodlands related activities for some time. Costs incurred were £3.5m (£750K BCC, £750K AVDC, £550K LGF, £60K Enterprise Zone and £1.390m AVA legacy funds).

The funding had been made available on the basis that it would be fully recouped from the project. There were risks associated with this and it would ultimately depend on the total cost versus income derived from the scheme. If the scheme did not achieve minimum expected returns it was possible that the Councils would not be fully repaid.

However, Cabinet understood that any payback of funding would be to the new Buckinghamshire Council and would be dependant on overall viability. It was understood that this was a priority project of strategic interest and would create more jobs, a school, growth and economic development in the area and was certainly worthwhile in those terms even if the funding was not paid back. In this regard there was a clear expectation by residents that the area would be developed with roads opened by 2021.

A Housing Infrastructure Fund Forward Funding (HIF FF) and Gap Funding bid totalling £54.15m had been submitted to Homes England to support the development infrastructure and assist with land assembly for Woodlands and the Aylesbury Garden Town. If successful, the HIF bid would provide funding to continue some of the planning and preparatory work, but a total of £700,000 was required between now and November in order to minimise any delays on the 2 schemes and to make sure all information was available to support the HIF bid submission.

The funding was to be used for Phase 1 and how the site was taken forward and the site was at a critical point in terms of viability. Buckinghamshire County Council had approved their part of the funding and it was a priority project with the development being of strategic interest.

A total of £550,000 was required to progress the design of the A41 roundabout and the design and planning application for Eastern Link Road South and £150,000 was required to develop the full business case options and returns for the Woodlands scheme in time for the November HIF funding decision. The project was now at a critical point in the delivery phase and BA were close to securing a planning consent. However, all allocated funding had now been committed and without further contributions the project was in imminent danger of stalling.

The project remained a priority for the Shadow Unitary authority. A report had been considered on 23 July 2019 which had supported Bucks County Council's and Aylesbury Vale's ongoing financial commitment to this project.

Bucks County Council had already obtained the necessary consent to commit its share of the funds required to keep work continuing on the project. BCC were conducting due diligence that would be shared with AVDC and include how the governance of Woodlands might look and how the project would be delivered.

RESOLVED –

That approval be given to £350,000 from the New Homes Bonus Reserve fund being allocated, in line with the Cabinet report, to allow Buckinghamshire Advantage and the Buckinghamshire County Council to continue work as promotor of the Woodlands Site.

**NOTE:** Councillor Bowles declared a prejudicial interest as a Buckinghamshire Advantage Board Member and left the meeting whilst this matter was considered.

**3. PROPOSED TRANSFER OF AYLESBURY VALE ESTATES ASSET AT HADDENHAM (WITHDRAWN)**

This agenda item was withdrawn by Aylesbury Vale Estates.

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Cabinet  
11 September 2019

**NEW HOMES BONUS GRANT FUNDING APPLICATIONS**  
**Councillor Mordue**  
**Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources**

**1 Purpose**

- 1.1 To make decisions on the allocation of New Homes Bonus (NHB) grant funding for parish and town council projects, based on the recommendations of the Informal NHB Grants Panel.

**2 Recommendation**

- |   |
|---|
| 2.1 That the recommendations of the Informal NHB Grants Panel be approved, as set out in the schedule attached at Appendix A. |
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**3 Background**

- 3.1 The Informal NHB Grants Panel met on Wednesday 24 July 2019 to consider applications for funding from parish and town councils under the NHB grant funding scheme. The Panel consisted of the Chairman of the Panel, Cllr Peter Strachan, Councillors Steven Lambert and Derek Town and parish council representatives John Gilbey and Nick Hierons (nominated by the Aylesbury Vale Association of Local Councils - AVALC). The Cabinet Member responsible, Councillor Howard Mordue, the Senior Communities Officer, Diana Houghton and the Grants Officer, Jan Roffe were also in attendance. Apologies were received from Andrew Small, Director.
- 3.2 The New Homes Bonus (NHB) is a national initiative whereby funding from the national revenue grant for local authorities has been top sliced and allocated to local councils in proportion to the number of new homes in their area. For every new home built and occupied in Aylesbury Vale, and for every long-term unoccupied property that is brought back into use, the Government gives the council a NHB grant each year.
- 3.3 In December 2012 the council agreed to allocate a share of the NHB to parish and town councils, to help alleviate the impacts of housing growth on local communities. 20% of the Government allocation has been set aside for the funding scheme, which equates to £858,000 being available in this round.
- 3.4 Project underspends totalling £22,378 were carried over from project grant funding awarded in previous rounds and added to the budget, making a total of £880,378.
- 3.5 Of this, an allocation of £80,000 for the current year's NHB micro grant scheme was deducted leaving a total of **£800,378** available to allocate in this round. An explanation of the figures can also be found at Appendix A.
- 3.6 In January 2013 Cabinet agreed the structure of an Informal Panel, to consider applications from parish and town councils and make recommendations to Cabinet on the allocation of the NHB funding. This Panel

agreed the detailed criteria and process for the grant scheme, based on the decisions of Cabinet.

3.7 The key criteria are:

- a. Applications should include a business case which as a minimum should demonstrate:
  - the impact of growth on their area. Applications needn't necessarily be from the area directly taking growth in recognition of the fact that those most affected by growth are not always within the area taking that growth
  - the need or community desire for the investment proposed
  - firm costings together with a funding and delivery plan
- b. Awards can be for up to 100% of the scheme cost and support both capital and revenue projects (with a life of less than 6 years).

3.8 Prospective applicants were required to submit a preliminary 'Expression of Interest' (EOI) form to identify whether projects met the criteria, to discuss other possible funding sources (including Section 106), and avoid abortive work for potential applicants. The deadline for applications was Friday 14 June 2019.

#### **4. Applications for funding**

4.1 In total 20 EOI's or enquires were received. 18 parish and town councils applied but one had to withdraw its application. 17 applications were therefore considered by the Panel requests for grant funding totalling £872,565 (towards total project costs of £1,007,748). The total budget available was £800,378. The round was therefore £72,187 oversubscribed.

4.2 In considering the applications the Panel recommended grant funding totalling £794,125, as set out in Appendix A.

4.3 The recommendation of the Panel is that the underspend of £6,253 be allocated to the New Homes Bonus Micro Grant fund, which is oversubscribed.

#### **5. Next steps**

5.1 Once the level of funding is agreed, funding agreements with successful applicants will be finalised. These will include timescales for the delivery of the project, to be monitored by the grants officer, and against which phased grant payments may be made. Appropriate recognition of the support provided by the NHB funding scheme will also be sought through media publicity and appropriate signage.

- 5.2 In light of the unitary decision, this is the final New Homes Bonus grant funding round to be administered by AVDC.
- 5.3. NHB micro grant applications will continue to be assessed on a monthly basis as long as there are funds remaining from the budget allocation until the end of the financial year.

## **6. Options considered and reasons for the recommendation**

- 6.1 The options considered by the Panel for each application were: whether to fund; the level of funding; and whether any conditions should be attached to the funding above those included in the standard funding agreement. The standard conditions are that Planning permission has been granted, that a plaque or equivalent acknowledgment of AVDC's New Homes Bonus is displayed at an appropriate location, that there is recognition of New Homes Bonus support in all publicity and that funding will be released upon the production of invoices for work completed.
- 6.2 The level of funding recommended and the reasons for the panel's recommendations are outlined at Appendix A.

## **7. Resource implications**

- 7.1 All funding for parish and town councils under the NHB grant funding scheme will be drawn from the 20% of the Government allocation set aside and ring fenced for the scheme in 2019/20.
- 7.2 If the Panel's recommendations are approved a total of £794,125 will be committed to projects This represents over 99% of the budget available. The underspend of £6,253 would be allocated to the micro grant fund with Cabinet's approval.

## **8. Response to Key Aims and Objectives**

- 8.1 The allocation of New Homes Bonus funding to parish and town councils helps support the council's corporate plan priorities of protecting and improving the living experience in the Vale and improving our interaction with parish councils.

Contact Officer  
Background Documents

Jan Roffe, 01296 585186  
Appendix A: Advisory Grants Panel's Funding Recommendations for NHB 2019/20.  
Previous Cabinet and Council reports relating to the New Homes Bonus.  
Notes of the Informal Panel meeting of 24 July 2019

## Advisory Grants Panel's Funding Recommendations - New Homes Bonus 2019/20

Appendix A

Budget 2019/20	£858,000.00
Project underspends/unallocated funds	£22,378.00
Total	£880,378.00
Minus microgrant allocation 2019/20	£80,000.00
<b>Budget available</b>	<b>£800,378.00</b>

Parish/Town Council applying	Project Title	Total project costs	Amount Requested	Grant Panel's funding recommendation	Reasons for the recommendation
Buckingham	Improvements to the community centre at Cornwalls Meadow	£177,794.00	£177,794.00	£150,000.00	<p>The majority of the Panel supported this application (4:1). The application clearly evidenced the huge amount of growth in Buckingham and the surrounds and the need for a larger space for community hire in the town centre. The Panel appreciated that the current Town Council Chamber, (which is available for community hire seven days a week, other than on Monday evenings when council meetings are held) is compact, and that it is sensible to knock down a wall to make it significantly larger as current usage is quite limited. Carrying out roof repairs at the same time as installing air-conditioning throughout and solar panels for energy conservation would enable related works to be carried out at the same time. The Panel agreed that as Buckingham has recieved the highest total of awards over the life of the NHB fund the town council should make a contribution toward the project from its own sizeable reserves.</p>

Parish/Town Council applying	Project Title	Total project costs	Amount Requested	Grant Panel's funding recommendation	Reasons for the recommendation
Stoke Hammond	Replace and repair the roof to the community centre and redecoration of the interior	£23,230.00	£23,230.00	£23,230.00	The application clearly explained how considerable growth in the village in recent years has increased the demand on this valued community facility. The Panel unanimously supported this application to repair and replace sections of the roof of the community centre to prevent more extensive and costly repairs for the parish further down the line and recommended funding up to the level requested.
Page 12 Haddenham	Phase 1 or a larger project to refurbish community facilities and the village hall at Banks Park	£222,000.00	£173,000.00	£165,000.00	The Panel recognised that growth in Haddenham has greatly increased the need for fit-for-purpose community facilities and that this first phase of a project to improve facilities for the village would bring back into use the former BCC Day Centre which is currently unused and derelict and for which the lease is in the process of being surrendered to the PC. As the round was oversubscribed the Panel agreed that the parish council should make a contribution to project costs from the Asset Reserves account. Funding to be subject to confirmation that the lease has been surrendered to the parish council.
(1)Stewkley	Upgrade to play area (priority project)	£50,000.00	£40,000.00	£40,000.00	The Panel was unanimous in recommending funding up to the full amount requested for improved play facilities for this growing community. The current play equipment is 20 years old and no longer meets RoSPA standards.

Parish/Town Council applying	Project Title	Total project costs	Amount Requested	Grant Panel's funding recommendation	Reasons for the recommendation
(2) Stewkley	New semi-automatic toilet cubicle at the recreation ground	£65,000.00	£30,000.00	£30,000.00	The Panel also unanimously agreed to recommend funding up to the level requested for a new toilet facility at the recreation ground. The current facilities are in an extremely poor and unhygienic condition as evidenced by the photographs submitted with the application. The proposed new semi-automatic cubicle would also provide disabled access and baby change facilities. Funding to be subject to the application to Sport England for the shortfall in funds being successful.
Page 13 Grendon Underwood	Refurbishment of Village Hall Cloakroom facilities	£18,000.00	£16,000.00	£16,000.00	The panel fully supported this application to improve the current cloakroom facilities at the village hall. From the photographs supplied the cloakrooms are clearly in need of modernisation and currently detract from the viability and desirability of the village hall for this growing community. The Panel recommended funding up to the level requested.
Marsh Gibbon	Renovation of cemetery roads and pathways	£60,445.00	£55,165.00	£55,165.00	The panel was unanimous in recommending the full amount requested to this small burial authority which has an increasing and ageing population. There are also commitments to build a further 49 homes in the village which has already grown by 14% in the last six years. There have been an increasing number of burial requests from neighbouring Charndon Calvert and Poundon, none of which have their own cemeteries.

Parish/Town Council applying	Project Title	Total project costs	Amount Requested	Grant Panel's funding recommendation	Reasons for the recommendation
(1) Gawcott with Lenborough	Perimeter fencing around all weather pitch	£24,000.00	£21,745.00	£20,000.00	The Panel was unanimous in recommending funding for the installation of a new reinforced steel fence to replace flimsy wire fencing that is now 25 years old and bent and holed. The fence will protect this valued community asset which is considered one of the best in the area. The pitch is available for wider community use when not in use for football fixtures by teams from Winslow, Buckingham and also local businesses. A small village with a small precept but the parish council will contribute the shortfall.
(2) Gawcott with Lenborough	Extension to playing field car park	£36,000.00	£32,000.00	£32,000.00	The Panel appreciated that current parking provision at the playing fields in Gawcott is inadequate for the widely used community playing fields and all-weather pitch and unanimously agreed to recommend ringfencing the funds requested. This would give the parish time to re-cost the project as, unfortunately, an important element of the groundworks, as recommended by the manufacturers of the proposed interlocking paving grid, was not included in the surveyor's estimate submitted with the application. A condition of funding is that the parish must submit a revised application and associated costings within six months and demonstrate where any shortfall would come from now that project costs have risen.

Parish/Town Council applying	Project Title	Total project costs	Amount Requested	Grant Panel's funding recommendation	Reasons for the recommendation
Great Brickhill	Village Hall extension and refurbishment	£158,000.00	£150,000.00	£110,000.00	<p>This is a two phase project to extend and then refurbish the village hall. Growth in Great Brickhill and particularly in neighbouring Stoke Hammond and nearby Newton and Easton Leys has put pressure on the existing facilities. The Panel unanimously agreed that, in an oversubscribed round, is was not in a position to award funding towards the second phase refurbishment element, which has not yet been properly costed. The Panel therefore recommended funding towards the extension element (which has total costs of £120,000) in order for this phase of the project to progress with a contribution from the parish council's Business Savings Account.</p>

Parish/Town Council applying	Project Title	Total project costs	Amount Requested	Grant Panel's funding recommendation	Reasons for the recommendation
Cuddington  Page 16	Traffic calming measure - build out to slow traffic travelling through village	£48,600.00	£48,600.00	£48,600.00	<p>Although growth in Cuddington itself is minimal a Transport for Bucks feasibility study for the project acknowledges that the volume of traffic travelling in and out of the village from both directions has grown significantly over a two year period. This is most likely because of growth in neighbouring Haddenham and Stone. BCC have agreed to fund new road markings at major junctions from S106 from 8 new homes that are currently going through Planning. The majority of the Panel was therefore minded to fund the project (4:1). The Panel agreed that it should be mindful of pedestrian road safety, particularly that of children crossing the road and that a build out to reduce the speed of traffic would be an appropriate additional safety measure.</p>
Ivinghoe	Improvements to the play areas at Ivinghoe Lawn and Ivinghoe Aston	£54,505.00	£54,505.00	£54,505.00	<p>The Panel fully supported this project to improve two play areas in the village of Ivinghoe and to include a zip wire at Ivinghoe Lawn to appeal to older children who are not catered for at the moment. The improvements will also include a fully accessible gate to make it easier for families with disabled children to access the play area without having to cross an often muddy field. Growth in neighbouring Pitstone has impacted on the numbers using the play facilities.</p>

Parish/Town Council applying	Project Title	Total project costs	Amount Requested	Grant Panel's funding recommendation	Reasons for the recommendation
Ivinghoe (on behalf of Community Hub Trustees)	Replace and repair suspended flooring in hub.	£11,880.00	£10,000.00	£10,000.00	The Panel also unanimously recommended funding up to the amount requested to provide a long-lasting, good quality floor surface at the community hub, a valued and extremely well used community asset. Part of the existing flooring dates back to 1865, Support bearers and joists are suffering from rot and woodworm. The rest was replaced in the 1930's and has reached the end of its working life.
Stone Bishopstone & Hartwell	Outdoor fitness equipment	£19,563.78	£7,832.00	£8,000.00	The Panel unanimously supported this application to provide residents and visitors to the recreation ground with free to use fitness equipment to encourage fitness and wellbeing amongst the young as well as older people and recommended just above the amount requested to support project costs. The parish council has secured most of the remainder of the funds through a contribution from the LAF and a grant from VAHT.

Parish/Town Council applying	Project Title	Total project costs	Amount Requested	Grant Panel's funding recommendation	Reasons for the recommendation
Watermead	New flooring in village hall	£4,036.00	£4,000.00	£4,000.00	The majority of the Panel (4:1) appreciated that large amounts of growth in Aylesbury, and most particularly in Berryfields and adjacent Buckingham Park, has significantly impacted on use of the village hall at Watermead. The vinyl flooring is 30 years old and in need of replacement. New flooring will not only benefit the community groups using the hall regularly but also the pre-school that uses the hall on a daily basis.
<p style="text-align: center;">Page 18</p> <p>Ashendon</p>	Protection of footway eroded by traffic	£16,625.00	£12,625.00	£12,625.00	Although growth in the small village of Ashendon is minimal, the application explains that growth in the surrounding areas, in particular Haddenham and Long Crendon, has increased traffic through the village. The majority of the Panel (4:1) recommended funding the project up to the amount requested, mindful that this is a small parish with minimal reserves and also mindful of the safety of school children and pedestrians who use the footway along Main Street to provide safe passage to the bus stop. The footway is being eroded by wide vehicles mounting the kerb to pass each other and unless action is taken the footway will become unusable and pedestrians will have to walk on the road. The new footway kerbing would be double height to protect it from further erosion. Funding to be subject an application to the LAF for the shortfall being successful so that the project can proceed.

Parish/Town Council applying	Project Title	Total project costs	Amount Requested	Grant Panel's funding recommendation	Reasons for the recommendation
Mentmore	New heating system for village hall	£18,069.00	£16,069.00	£15,000.00	The Panel unanimously recommended funding for a new heating system in the village hall. The current overnight storage heaters are inefficient and costly to run for a small parish with a small precept. There was no mention of growth or the impact of it in the application. For this reason the Panel decided not to recommend the full amount requested and that the shortfall is met from the parish council's reserves set aside for village hall repairs and maintenance.
<b>Totals</b>		£1,007,747.78	£872,565.00	<b>£794,125.00</b>	
<b>Budget</b>				<b>£800,378.00</b>	
Remaining balance to be allocated to the NHB Micro Grant Scheme with Cabinet's approval				<u><b>£6,253.00</b></u>	

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**Cabinet**  
**11 September 2019**

**AVDC ENVIRONMENTAL INITIATIVES**  
**Councillor Irwin**  
**Cabinet Member for Environment**

**1 Purpose**

- 1.1 This report highlights the work that AVDC has undertaken to improve the environment of the Vale and proposes the continuation of the environmental initiative with the allocation of the resources needed to achieve that.

**2 Recommendations/for decision**

- |     |  |
|-----|--|
| 2.1 | That the work the Council is already undertaking on environmental issues be noted.   |
| 2.2 | That Cabinet agree that future environmental actions should continue until vesting day focus on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Providing Environmental Leadership.</li><li>• Supporting Local Initiatives.</li><li>• Working in Partnership.</li></ul> |
| 2.3 | That Council be recommended to release a budget of up to £60,000 to facilitate the continuation of AVDC's environmental initiatives programme.   |

**3 Executive summary**

- 3.1 At the Council meeting of 17 July 2019, the Leader announced that Officers had been asked to facilitate a debate at the next full meeting of the Council on the actions that AVDC was taking, and might be able to take in the future, to mitigate the effects of climate change.
- 3.2 This report therefore asks Members to note the significant success that the Council – working with residents and other stakeholders – has achieved in reducing CO2 emissions over recent years and highlights some of the nationally recognised environmental work the Council has undertaken. The report recognises, however, it that further work is needed locally if we are to maintain the momentum required meet the challenging target set by the Government for the UK to be carbon neutral by 2050.
- 3.3 The report therefore proposes that funding be made available to employ a technical consultant to draft and implement the next phase of the Council's environmental initiative programme whilst permanent officers continue to work upon the delivery of the new unitary council.
- 3.4 To facilitate the debate on actions to be taken by the Council before vesting day, the report highlights some examples of what could be achieved locally that would continue to drive cultural change and improve focus on environmental issues in the vale.
- 3.5 The report highlights some areas of best practice from other council and identifies some ideas of the type of potential actions that members may wish to debate.

**4 Supporting information**

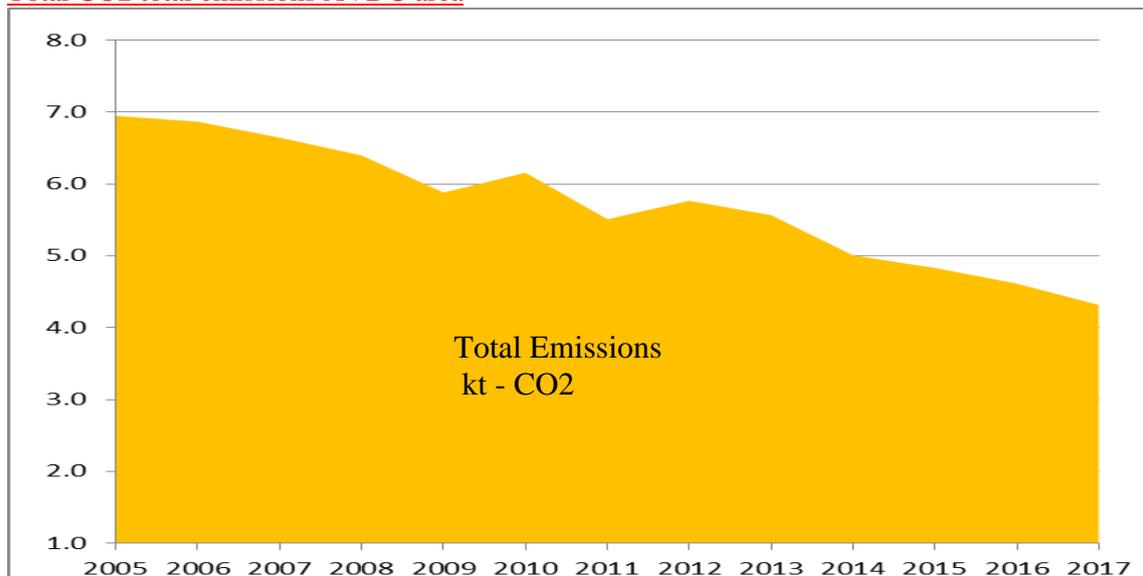
- 4.1 The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) October 2018 report on climate change highlighted the chilling fact that the world has just 12 years to make considerable positive change in the way we deal with our

environment before irreparable damage is done to our planet. This report received significant public attention and has resulted in a significant increase in environmental awareness of the population as a whole.

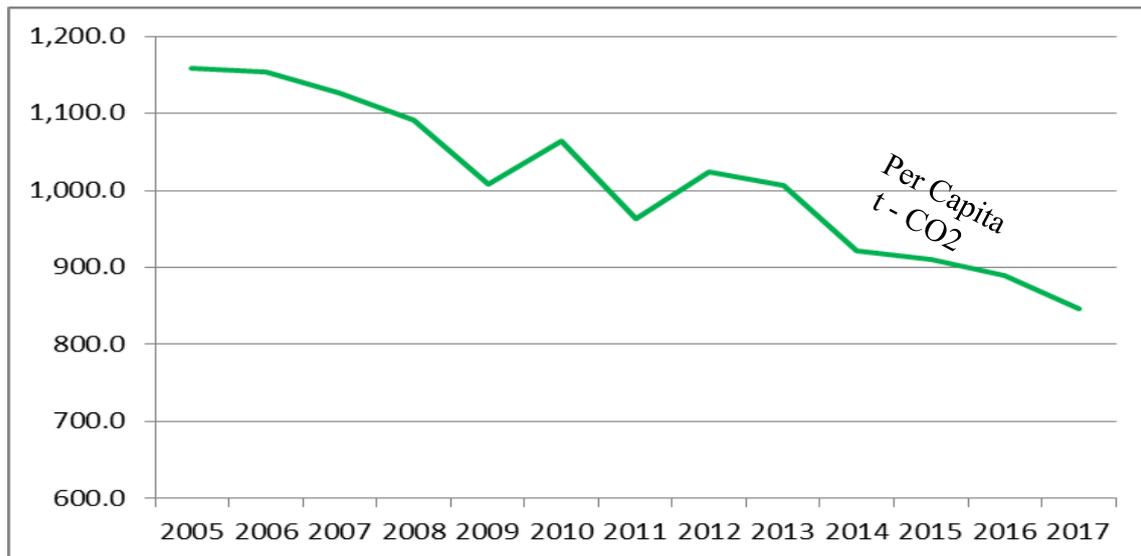
- 4.2 In June 2019 the Government responded to the report by announcing that the UK will cut emissions to net zero by 2050.
- 4.3 On a local level, many Councils (now 80+) across the UK have declared a “climate emergency” and pledged to significantly reduce their carbon emissions - or become carbon neutral - by 2050 or earlier.
- 4.4 Although these declarations have generally been well received, a number of Councils who made the declaration have had it criticised as an empty gesture as they did not put in place an action plan to achieve these aims nor did they put in place any monitoring or reporting arrangements.
- 4.5 With the new Buckinghamshire Council replacing the existing councils in April 2020 the practical focus of AVDCs actions needs to be on practical initiatives that deliver results in months not years. This report outlines some proposals for giving fresh impetus to our work in addressing the current environmental challenges and continues to build on a culture of supporting the environment that the work of this council has already achieved.
- 4.6 AVDC already have a strong track record in addressing environmental concerns and CO2 emissions. Supporting the work being undertaken nationally by Government and NGOs, AVDC have worked locally with residents, businesses and other stakeholders to reduce carbon emissions across the vale.
- 4.7 This work has strongly contributed to a significant success with both overall emissions and per capita emissions across the vale reducing significantly since 2005.

- Source – data.gov.uk last data available is for 2017.

Total CO2 total emissions AVDC area



Co2 emissions per capita AVDC area



4.8 This represents a **27%** reduction in CO2 across the vale overall and a very positive **38%** reduction in the per capita figure. In particular, the per capita reduction compares favourably with the Buckinghamshire average of **33%**

4.9 In essence, AVDC have built environmental considerations into every aspect of the work that we undertake as a council. This is illustrated by the list of existing undertakings in Appendix 1 of this report, with the case studies below being just some of the highlights that have been recognised on the national stage.

***Kingsbrook Development (Planning)***

*AVDCs commitment to working with partners to deliver on the environmental agenda is typified by the Kingsbrook development, the outcome of a unique collaboration between AVDC, the RSPB, and Barret and David Wilson Homes. Kingsbrook stretches over 1000 acres with 2,450 new homes.*

*A commitment to putting nature at the heart of development is its defining feature and a central tenant of AVDC's promotion of the garden town principles. 60% of Kingsbrook is green infrastructure, including ponds, parks, meadows, orchards, wildlife corridors, wildflower grassland and a nature reserve to encourage invertebrates.*

*Rills and swales have been employed to promote wetlands and all show gardens are wildflower planted. The RSPB were instrumental in devising a special brick to allow swallows and house martins to roost in homes without damaging brickwork. It is hoped that this unique approach can help form a template for future sustainable development at a national level.*

4.10 Kingsbrook shows the impact that AVDCs policies can have on improving the environment and also how we can work in partnership to deliver good quality ecologically friendly developments.

4.11 Another positive example is the UK Black Poplar Conservation Group where the council has worked with volunteers, a local charity and the Royal Botanic Gardens. This work not only helps protect these vitally important trees but also recognises the fantastic work of a local organisation that supports people with mental health challenges. This initiative highlights the importance of

living in a healthy, clean and vibrant environment and the benefits this affords to all residents mental health.

***UK Black Poplar Conservation Group (Heritage)***

*The UK Black Poplar Conservation Group was set up by AVDC's Environment team with the objective of co-ordinating conservation efforts nationally. Aylesbury Vale is home to over half the national population of the rare native Black Poplar tree and the Environment Team coordinates the Group which has promoted conservation for 20 years, by raising public awareness, delivering planting programmes, genetic research and establishing clone banks in partnership with the Royal Botanic Gardens.*

*Examples of significant work include the new Arla development, with a landscape scheme that saw 3,000 black poplars planted at the Environment Team's request, representing a 25 per cent increase in the UK population of the species, whilst the Kingsbrook development will create the UK's largest black poplar woodland.*

*The team has also worked with Lindengate (a mental health charity utilising therapeutic horticulture) to nurture a new disease-resistant strain developed at Kew Gardens. Lindengate have established a 'Tree Nursery', which will produce locally grown stock with a known provenance.*

- 4.12 AVDC also have a great record in protecting endangered species and are national leaders with the Great Crested Newt Licensing Scheme.

***Great Crested Newt Licensing Scheme (Ecology)***

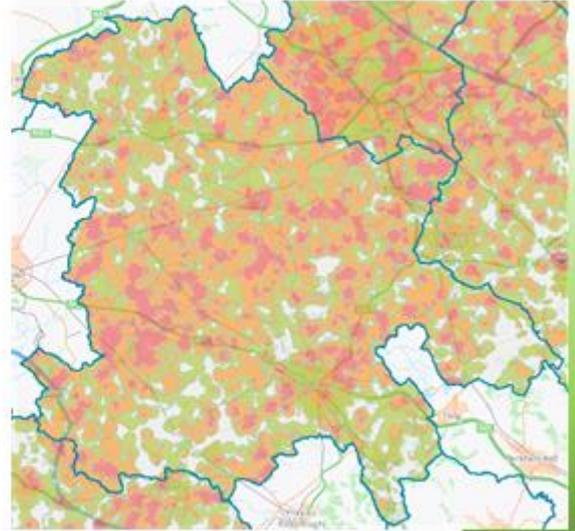
*AVDC were one of the first council's within the UK to adopt this new and novel method of conservation for this nationally protected species and were the first authority to grant a license. Due to their protected status GCN often come into conflict with planned developments and frequently cost developers a significant amount of time and money through the planning process. However despite high levels of protection the species continues to be in decline nationally.*

*The district license scheme is designed to balance the needs of ecology and the increased development demand, improving GCN conservation on a landscape scale and preventing costly delays in planning applications. The scheme provides for a conservation strategy that creates a minimum of four new ponds for every newt pond lost, bringing huge benefits for great crested newts and lots of other wildlife.*

- 4.13 As can be seen from the map below the work we are undertaking in this area is vital as the vale provides a fantastic natural habitat for these rare creatures.

## Aylesbury Vale

- ▶ Red Zone (area deemed as being most likely to support GCN – covers 14% of land within Aylesbury Vale)
- ▶ 42% (90/212) of ponds within Aylesbury Vale found in land allocated for development that falls within areas marked as red zones.
- ▶ AVDC first LPA within the UK to adopt the NatureSpace District Licence scheme.
- ▶ First development to use district licensing in the UK – Waddesdon Parkway Cycle route.
- ▶ Total number of developments using scheme: 6
- ▶ Total number of enquiries: 28
- ▶ Compensation sites (where new terrestrial and aquatic habitat for great crested newts is created) include: Shabington Woods SSSI, Rushbeds Wood, Finemere Wood and Long Spinney.



## 5 Options

- 5.1 Currently, considerable officer and member time is taken up with delivering a new unitary council for Buckinghamshire and consideration was given to having a hiatus in the environmental programme until the new council is in place.
- 5.2 It was decided, however, that despite this Council's success so far the level of environmental challenge that the country faces is daunting and it is vital that we continue to both drive forward change across the Vale and also support our residents in maintaining or creating the best environment for them to live and grow. The option of a hiatus is therefore not recommended.
- 5.3 Instead, it is proposed that the Council establishes a budget of £60,000 to fund the administrative, capital and resource costs of producing the options report and then delivering the next phase of the initiative.
- 5.4 The above budget, which would need to be agreed by Council on 18 September 2019, would fund the production of a full options and appraisal paper for further consideration. However, the focus of future actions should be on projects that deliver in the relatively short term but also support the growing awareness of the importance of environmental issues to residents. Some potential examples are given below.
- 5.5 **Providing Environmental Leadership** - The Council's track record in this area has so far been good (see AVDC context earlier), but this needs to continue and the profile of the work undertaken increased locally to encourage actions by residents. Some examples of actions that could be proposed could be a "litter pick" by council members or members acting as environmental champions at parish council meetings both of which would show the commitment of members to delivering a cleaner environment.

- 5.6 **Supporting Local Initiatives** - One of the proposal is to look at ways to support some of the excellent work being undertaken by the young people of the vale.
- 5.7 At the last Council meeting, Councillor Steve Bowles highlighted the excellent work being undertaken by one of his young residents. A nine year old pupil of Wendover Junior School has launched a “Kids Clean Britain” initiative. She wants to encourage people to go out in their local community to collect litter bring it to a central point for collection by the local refuse service. It will help people to think before they litter this scheme has been successful in Australia and brings communities together.
- 5.8 The Council should have a role in identifying, recognising and supporting initiatives such as these empowering our residents in ensuring the Vale remains a green and pleasant place to live.
- 5.9 One potential idea is to sponsor the creation of schemes or awards aimed at young people that encourage good environmental behaviour. A couple of examples of schemes we could launch are detailed below.

### *Young Environmental Champions*

*This focuses less on prizes/awards initially but more around encouragement, communications and building momentum for the young champions. Children should start with bronze and complete each activity until they reach the Gold badge.*

*They should complete the following to receive a bronze badge;*

- *Be a champion for litter picking at school*
- *Walk, cycle or take public transport/car share to school regularly*

*Silver badge*

- *Take part in a community litter pick*
- *Be a recycling champion at school and home -know the difference between the bins and how to use spot what is recyclable or not*

*Gold badge*

- *Grow your own vegetables or herbs and use at home and in your packed lunch.*
- *Organise a litter pick at school or in a park near where you live*

- 5.10 We know there will be young people that are already surpassing the young environmental champions Gold badge level, so there is the option to create a special category for them and they have a bigger badge/lanyards and then offer them the opportunity for a special presentation at council, an interview, social media coverage etc.
- 5.11 These is also the option of making a small contribution towards the administrative costs of these local schemes with a bi-monthly presentation of a certificate and cheque for £25 - £50.
- 5.12 Working in Partnership - The Council recognises the important role that local businesses and charities play in delivering local environmental initiatives on the ground. An interesting example is shown in appendix 2 of this report with “Refill Woking” where the Council has persuaded local businesses to

advertise that they provide free tap water to encourage the reduction of single use plastic bottles.

## **6 Reasons for Recommendation**

- 6.1 As global climate challenges continue to increase, it is considered imperative that locally we maintain the momentum of the environmental improvements that AVDC already play an important role in delivering.

## **7 Resource implications**

- 7.1 This new phase of our environmental initiative will require the creation of a budget of up to £60,000 to provide administrative and technical resource required to develop the action plan and deliver the initiative. As no monies have currently been specified for this use, the budget will need to be funded through the use of general funds, unallocated balances

Contact Officer  
Background Documents

Jeff Membro 01296 585316  
**Appendix 1** - Environmental measures/actions by AVDC  
**Appendix 2** - BEST PRACTICE EXAMPLES

## **Appendix 1 - Environmental measures/actions by AVDC**

### **Community Centres**

- Hawkslade community centre - Solar panels
- Alfred Rose, Hawkslade, Southcourt, Bedgrove and Prebendal all have LED lighting throughout the buildings and presence detector in toilets and public areas.
- Southcourt – Loft installation
- Prebendal and Alfred Rose – Cavity Wall installation

### **Aqua Vale**

- Pool cover

### **Gateway**

- Presence detector on every floor
- LED lighting in the street
- Lease car pool including 2 fully electric & 2 petrol hybrid vehicles.
- We have recently converted over 4 of our company car users (building control team) to petrol hybrid vehicles to be delivered in Aug/Sept.
- EV charging points in the car park
- Energy saving device on boilers

### **The Exchange**

- Green Roof
- Rainwater harvesting
- Cycle stand

### **Car parks**

- Replacement lighting in all car parks

### **Parks & Green Infrastructure**

- Securing (and maintaining) Green Flag awards for three parks
- Published AVDC's Green Infrastructure Strategy (only DC in Bucks to have done so)
- Creation and improvement of sustainable meadows, now home to native orchids
- Tree planting incl 'Trees Please' initiative launch several years ago by Leisure
- Promoting National Tree Week with tree planting ceremony
- Participation in the national play builder scheme delivering play area better connected to nature
- Encouraging the relaxing grass cutting under tree canopies and along river margins
- Replacing summer annual bedding schemes with perennial planting; less water demands, zero peat, no energy demands

### **Ecology**

- Expert input on Kingsbrook development – including the development of wildlife friendly housing in partnership with the RSPB. This featured as a case study in the Governments 25 year Environment Plan.
- First authority to issue a license under the Great Crested Newt district licensing scheme

- Securing funds from Berryfields development to mitigate impact on farmland birds species; funds hedgerow Havens project delivered in partnership with Berks, Bucks, Oxon Wildlife Trust
- Establishing a supporting volunteer Groups; Vale Countryside Volunteers, North Bucks Bat Group, Owl and Raptor Group, Bucks Amphibian and Reptile Group, Dormouse Group, Swift project
- Develop VALP policy and SPD to deliver biodiversity net gains
- Produce Water Advice Note (covering natural water courses) for VALP SPD
- Provide service to check for protected species ahead of development
- Raised initial concerns of pollution in the River Thame from Aylesbury Sewage works, resulting in a record £20M fine for Thames Water. Ongoing representation at meetings to ensure there is not a repeat incident
- S106 funded project to reduce flood risk in Buckingham through natural flood management measures
- National Black Poplar conference held at the Gateway, work with Lindengate to develop nursery stock for use on developments, project with RBG Kew to bank seed and develop genetic diversity
- Establishing peregrine nesting box and platform on top of Bucks CC offices, and setup un webcam; attracting international audience with comments from viewers in Japan
- Provide expert advice on national infrastructure projects – HS2, EWR, Expressway. Achieved (in partnership) commitment to biodiversity gains as part of the EWR public enquiry process

#### **Air Quality**

- Participating in national clean air day
- Working with Bucks Air Quality Management Group to produce new strategy and Supplementary Planning Guidance for VALP
- Review of Air Quality Management Areas

#### **Environmental Health**

- Food Hygiene inspections include a check of waste disposal
- Promotion of noise action day
- Clean up of waste on nil ownership land to the rear of Cambridge Street and campaign to residents and businesses about responsible waste disposal

# AVDC Planning Policy Environmental Initiatives

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## **8 VALP Policies**

- S1 Sustainable development for Aylesbury Vale
- S4 Green belt
- S7 Previously developed land
- D1 Delivering Aylesbury Garden Town
- Site specific environmental criteria in VALP site allocation policies
- T1 Delivering the sustainable transport vision
- T6 Footpaths and cycle routes
- T7 Electric vehicle infrastructure
- NE1 Protected sites
- NE2 Biodiversity and geodiversity
- NE3 River and stream corridors
- NE4 The Chilterns AONB and setting
- NE5 Landscape character and locally important landscape
- NE6 Pollution, air quality and contaminated land
- NE7 Local green space
- NE8 Best and most versatile agricultural land
- NE9 Trees, hedgerows and woodlands
- C1 Conversion of rural buildings
- C2 Equestrian development
- C3 Renewable Energy
- C4 Protection of public rights of way
- I1 Green infrastructure
- I4 Flooding
- I5 Water resources

## **9 Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs)**

- District wide design guide SPD
- Biodiversity accounting SPD
- Aylesbury Garden Town Framework and Infrastructure SPD

## **10 Neighbourhood Plan Policies**

- Buckingham Neighbourhood Development Plan
  - DHE1 Protect existing trees and provision of trees in developments
  - DHE2 Standard of ecological information required to minimise the impact on natural habitats
  - DHE3 Protection of designated sites and local and national priority habitats and species
  - DHE4 Protection of movement corridors
  - DHE5 Biodiversity in development landscaping

- CLH3 Allocate land for allotments
- CLH5 Local green spaces
- CLH8 Continuation and expansion of the Riverside Walk
- I2 Renewable energy generation
- I3 Rainwater collection
- I5 Sewage Management
- Winslow Neighbourhood Plan
  - Policy 8 Cycle Routes
  - Policy 9 Bus Services
  - Policy 10 Traffic Management
  - Policy 19 Local Green Spaces
- Aston Clinton Neighbourhood Plan
  - L2 Leisure - Public open spaces, footpaths, cycle & bridleways
  - T1 Transport - Traffic mitigation
  - T2 Transport - Encourage walking & cycling
  - EN1 Environment - Development impact on biodiversity
  - EN2 Environment - Protecting biodiversity loss
  - EN3 Environment - Local Green Spaces
  - EN4 Environment - Abating flood risk
- Buckland Neighbourhood Plan
  - BP2 AONB/Green Belt
  - BP15 Natural Environment
- Wing Neighbourhood Plan
  - CGS1 – Respecting the Environment
  - CGS2 – Open Space in new development
  - CGS3 – Local Green Space Designation
- Winslow Neighbourhood Plan
  - Policy 19 – Local Green Spaces
- Quainton Neighbourhood Plan
  - Policy NE1 Designated Local Green Spaces
  - Policy NE2 Natural Environment
- Waddesdon Neighbourhood Plan
  - WAD13 Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity
  - WAD14 Local Green Spaces
- Pitstone Neighbourhood Plan
  - Policy 5: Area of Special Landscape Value - provides additional policy protection to an area of locally valued landscape
  - Policy 7: Local Green Space - protects areas of special importance locally from inappropriate development
  - Non-policy project to monitor and seek an increase to number of street trees and maintain and enhance small informal green spaces.
- Weston Turville Neighbourhood Plan
  - Policy T2: Strategy for improving pedestrian and cycle connections within the parish and to surrounding area - seeks to enhance accessibility on foot or by bike around the Parish

- Policy E1: Protection of Local Green Spaces - protects areas of special importance locally from inappropriate development
- Policy E2: Protection of key views and vistas - identifies and seeks to preserve key views and vistas into the countryside
- Policy E3: Biodiversity - seeks a net gain in biodiversity from development and protection of habitats
- Cheddington Neighbourhood Plan
  - Policy 5: Southend Hill and Westend Hill Heritage Asset & Special Landscape - defines the area as a non-designated heritage asset and landscape of special value in which appropriate mitigation would be necessary to enable development to be permitted
  - Policy 6: Green Infrastructure & Biodiversity - seeks to secure enhancements to the natural environment, habitats and green infrastructure including footpaths and cycleways.
  - Policy 7: Local Green Spaces - protects areas of special importance locally from inappropriate development
- Edlesborough Neighbourhood Plan
  - Policy EP9: Local Green Spaces - protects areas of special importance locally from inappropriate development
- Slapton Neighbourhood Plan
  - Policy SLP5: Local Green Spaces - protects areas of special importance locally from inappropriate development
- Worminghall Neighbourhood Plan
  - Policy CFR2: Recreation - seeks provision and enhancement of recreational facilities
- Long Crendon Neighbourhood Plan
  - Policy LC12: Key Views - identifies and seeks to preserve key views and vistas into the countryside
  - Policy LC13: Local Green Spaces - protects areas of special importance locally from inappropriate development
  - Policy LC14: Green Infrastructure & Biodiversity - seeks to secure enhancements to the natural environment, habitats and green infrastructure including footpaths and cycleways and a net gain in biodiversity where possible
  - Non-NP projects include ambitions for a cycle route to Thame, linking to Haddenham and Thame Parkway and enhancements to the recreation ground
  - Non-NP projects include ambitions for a cycle route to Thame, linking to Haddenham and Thame Parkway and enhancements to the recreation ground.
- Marsh Gibbon Neighbourhood Plan
  - Policies MG3 & 4, Local Green Spaces - protects areas of special importance locally from inappropriate development
  - Policy MG19: Enhancing, Protecting and Provision of new Natural Environment Habitats, Trees and Hedgerows - seeks natural

- environment enhancements, biodiversity net gain and protection of existing environmental assets
- Steeple Claydon Neighbourhood Plan
  - Policy SC6: Local Green Spaces - protects areas of special importance locally from inappropriate development
  - Non-NP projects include ambitions for enhancements to the recreation ground
- Haddenham Neighbourhood Plan
  - Policy TGA3: Cycle and Pedestrian Networks - seeks contributions from development to fund the design and delivery of a cycle route between Thame and the Haddenham and Thame Parkways station.
  - Policy HWS1: Local Green Space Designations: protects areas of special importance locally from inappropriate development
  - Policy SRL3: Enhancing, Protecting and Provision of new Natural Environment Habitats, Trees and Hedgerows - seeks natural environment enhancements, biodiversity net gain and protection of existing environmental assets

## APPENDIX 2 – BEST PRACTICE EXAMPLES

Broxtowe Borough Council – Clean and Green

### Clean and Green

**Information about the Council’s Clean and Green Campaign to make Broxtowe a cleaner place and how the local community can get involved.**



Our Clean and Green Campaign recently launched as part of an initiative to make Broxtowe a cleaner place.

There will be lots taking place as part of the campaign to complement what we already do to keep Broxtowe clean and tidy and we’ll keep you updated about events in your area.

#### **Join our Community Clean Team**

We are asking individuals, community groups, schools and businesses to take collective responsibility for keeping the Borough clean and tidy and encourage everyone to recycle more.

If you’d like to organise an event, we can help by loaning equipment.

[You can also download our useful resource pack \(.pdf\) \(0.97MB\) \(Opens in a New Window\)](#)which provides everything you need to organise your event including:

- Checklists for running a litter pick
- Risk assessments to help ensure you keep safe whilst doing your bit
- Posters and social media graphics to use to promote the fantastic work you’re doing
- Template press releases for you to use to promote your event



Don't forget to let us know what you're doing so we can promote it for you too. You can do this by emailing our Communications Team on [press@broxtowe.gov.uk](mailto:press@broxtowe.gov.uk)

If you'd like to organise an event, contact our Waste and Recycling Team.

### Woking Borough Council - Refill Woking

#### **Refill Woking**

We have teamed up with national charity, [City to Sea](#), to set up a local water refill initiative called, Refill Woking, to encourage the reduction of single use plastic bottles.

We work with Town Centre partners to recruit a network of local cafes, restaurants, shops and retail outlets, which offer a water bottle refill service free of charge.

Look out for the refill logo or try using the refill app to find your nearest location.



### **Appendix 3 – ‘TO FOLLOW’**

Schedule detailing how the funding will be used.

Cabinet  
11 September 2019

## **AYLESBURY VALE ESTATES – REVIEW OF PERFORMANCE AGAINST THE 2018/2019 BUSINESS PLAN**

**Councillor S Bowles**

**Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Economic Development**

### **1. Purpose**

- 1.1. To enable Cabinet to review the performance of Aylesbury Vale Estates (AVE) against the targets and commitments set out in the 2018/19 business plan.

### **2. For Decision**

- 2.1 To consider whether there are any issues that Cabinet wishes to further look at regarding Aylesbury Vale Estates performance against the 2018/19 Business Plan.

### **3. Supporting Information**

- 3.1 Attached is a copy of a report to be considered by the Economy and Business Development Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on 10 September, 2019. This sets out the key headlines of AVE's performance in 2018/19. More detailed information is contained in the confidential part of the Cabinet agenda.

- 3.2 Any comments from the Scrutiny Committee meeting will be reported verbally to the Cabinet meeting.

### **4. Options Considered/Reasons for Recommendations**

- 4.1 To determine whether there are any matters that should be addressed by AVE.

### **4. Resource Implications**

None.

**Contact Officer:** Teresa Lane (01296) 585006.

**Background documents:** These are listed in the attached report.

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**AYLESBURY VALE ESTATES – REVIEW OF PERFORMANCE AGAINST THE 2018/2019 BUSINESS PLAN**

**1 Purpose**

- 1.1 This purpose of this report is to enable the Scrutiny Committee to comment on a review of the performance of Aylesbury Vale Estates (AVE), against the targets and commitments set out in the 2018/2019 business plan.

**2 Recommendation**

- |  |
|--|
| 2.1 The Scrutiny Committee is asked to review the report set out as Appendix 1 in the confidential part of the Agenda and highlight any issues they wish to report to Cabinet. |
|--|

**3 Supporting information**

- 3.1 Each year AVE prepares a business plan which is considered by this scrutiny committee and Cabinet. The business plan includes a review of performance during the previous financial year and normally takes place in June but was deferred this year to enable the Committee to visit Silverstone.
- 3.2 The Asset Managers' report to the AVE Board for the period January – end of March 2019 forms the basis for the review of performance against the 18/19 business plan together with the end of year accounts. Both documents are set out in Appendix 1 in the confidential part of the agenda.
- 3.3 The Asset Managers will also be able to give a high level overview of progress against the current 2019/2020 business plan at the meeting. AVE is currently drafting its business plan for 2020/21 for consideration by the scrutiny and cabinet committees in November/December.
- 3.4 The Asset Managers will give a presentation to the Committee in the confidential part of the meeting. In the meantime, in summary, these are the headlines of AVE performance in 2018/2019 measured against the strategy and the key performance indicators:

**Strategy as set out in 2018/19 business plan**

Core aims were to:

- a. Increase investor revenue flows; and
- b. Support for the Council's economic development programme

**Achieved by:**

- a. Sale of high value land with low income, for reinvestment
- b. Pay off expensive debt in order to reduce cost of finance
- c. Reduce amortisation, which soaks up surplus income
- d. Target a distribution of £600,000 pa
- e. Maintain current levels of occupancy
- f. Retain major tenancies at Hale Leys

### **Sale of high value land with low income for reinvestment**

The sale of land known as Gateway phase 2 and the sale of the front part of the Askeys site at Stocklake did not take place for a variety of reasons by the end of the financial year as anticipated. The Asset Managers will explain the reasons for the delay at the meeting. The sale of the Stocklake site to Lidl has subsequently been achieved and the sale of the Gateway phase 2 site to a housing developer is expected to complete shortly.

Progress was made in 2018/2019 on preparing a small site at Adams Close, Buckingham for sale which has also now completed.

### **Pay off expensive debt in order to reduce the cost of finance**

The capital receipt received from the sale of the Stocklake site has been used to help achieve this albeit later than planned. The reduction in cost of finance will help improve cash flow and in 2019/2020, provide a degree of comfort to help AVE manage the new market and financial pressures which are emerging primarily as a result of Brexit.

### **Reduce amortisation, which soaks up surplus income**

This was achieved in relation to the amortisation of the senior debt with AVDC. In 2018/2019, AVE made substantial repayments of debt.

### **Target a distribution of £600,000 pa**

This was largely dependent of the sale of the two key sites. As this did not happen, the distribution was deferred. AVDC still expects to receive its 50% share of the distribution and also has planned for a distribution in 2019/20. This means that there is an expectation that two distributions will be received by then end of 2020.

### **Maintain current levels of occupancy**

In an important move, Cinram Novum were secured as new tenants for the large Sony site. Work began to develop options the long term future of the site.

There continued to be strong demand for the units on the industrial estates following an extensive investment plan to refurbish units and improve services to tenants. At the end of year, the void rate was 1.8%.

### **Retain major tenancies at Hale Leys**

Nationally, the retail market proved even more challenging in 2018/2019. Clarks relocated to Friars Square and Poundworld went into administration. However, other key tenants, notably Boots were retained by the centre.

Concentrated efforts began during the financial year to attract different uses for vacant units. Negotiations commenced for the conversion of the former Next unit to a Play and Stay and a restaurant, bar and roof top terrace. These negotiations have now completed, with permission for change of use granted. Construction work is now underway.

### **3.5 General financial performance**

- The voids percentage by rental value across the whole portfolio was 6.9% at the end of March compared to a target of 3.8% in the business plan. Of this, the multi-let industrial portfolio accounts for 1.8% of the 6.9% with Hale Leys accounting for the rest of the voids. The refurbishment of the units has contributed to the uptake.
- Rent invoiced for 18/19, was down 12% for the portfolio as a whole. Hale Leys accounted for much of this.
- The overall value of the portfolio decreased reflecting the challenging retail market Hale Leys is facing. However, the value of the rest of the portfolio increased.
- Debt fell in line with the business plan strategy and the loan to value ratio decreased from the previous year.

## **4 Resource implications**

4.1 None

Contact Officer  
Background Documents

Teresa Lane 01296 585006  
Aylesbury Vale Estates Business Plan 18/19  
End of year Report to AVE Board

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